

Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin

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NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

Washington Post: [Biden's debate-night stumble on oil highlights the delicate tightrope he must walk on climate change](#)

Large differences in climate goals between moderates and progressives within the Democratic Party complicate Biden's message and potential action on climate change. In Thursday's debate, his comment involving his plan to "transition from the oil industry" upset many moderate Democrats up for reelection, and he later clarified that "We're not getting rid of fossil fuels for a long time." He instead emphasized plans for increasing carbon capture technology.

Science: [U.S. climate report moves ahead after complaints about delays](#)

The National Climate Assessment is now scheduled to be published in 2023, one year later than expected. The process of soliciting authors to work on the project was recently restarted by NASA, after months of delay from the Trump Administration. The last assessment was released in 2018 and showed climate change effects across all regions of the country.

Guardian: ["It's about saving ourselves": Senator pushes plan to conserve 30% of US by 2030](#)

The UN's Convention on Biological Diversity's 30 by 30 plan was recently introduced to the Senate by New Mexico's Tom Udall and is being implemented in state bills in South Carolina and Hawaii and in an executive order by Gavin Newsom in California. Currently 12% of national land area, and 15% worldwide, is protected. Some conservationists want to aim for 50% protected land area by 2050.

Arctic Today: [The Trump administration proposes allowing seismic exploration in Alaska's Arctic refuge this winter](#)

The Bureau of Land Management on Friday released a proposal to begin a seismic survey in December that would look for underground signs of oil reserves over more than half a million acres on the east side of the refuge's coastal plain. The release comes less than two weeks before a presidential election that might force a change in administration, and with an especially short comment period.

Guardian: [Alarm as Arctic sea ice not yet freezing at latest date on record](#)

With temperatures recently 5 °C above average in the Laptev Sea and warm Atlantic waters breaking up normal stratification between warm and cooler ocean waters, ice has not yet formed in the Siberian Arctic Region. Laptev is considered the "birthplace of ice," which floats westward after forming in early winter. Scientists worry this could amplify many harmful feedback loops already taking place in the region.

Science: [Stem cell research, clinical use of “magic mushrooms” among issues on state ballots this year](#)
California proposes the renewal of funding for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, which focuses on embryonic stem cell research. The Rocky Mountain Wolf Action Fund aims to reintroduce gray wolves to parts of Colorado. Oregon voters will decide on the Psilocybin Mushroom Services Program Initiative, which would make Oregon the first state to legalize hallucinogenic fungi for clinical use. If passed, the Renewable Energy Standards Initiative in Nevada will require utility companies to get 50% of their energy from renewable sources by 2030.

InsideClimate News: [Clouds of concern linger as wildfires drag into flu season and Covid-19 numbers swell](#)

As the fire season expands into the flu season and continues to choke the air with wildfire smoke, solid answers about the connection between air pollution and Covid-19 are probably two years away.

Reuters: [Wildfire smoke may help virus spread, mouthwash helps curb it](#)

A roundup of some of the latest scientific studies on the novel coronavirus and efforts to find treatments and vaccines for COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

REGIONAL NEWS

IndyStar: [How President Trump's deregulatory approach to the environment could impact Indiana](#)

Almost 30 of the environmental rollbacks that the Trump administration has set in motion in the last 3½ years affect regulations to protect air quality. Experts say this could disproportionately affect states such as Indiana, where 59% of the power is derived from coal-fired power plants.

Indiana Environmental Reporter: [Indiana University professor appointed as chair of EPA's Science Advisory Board](#)

John Graham's academic work and precedents set during his time as President Bush's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) administrator have been cited in Trump administration environmental policy rollbacks like the Mercury and Air Toxic Standards and the repeal of the Clean Power Plan.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Scientific American: [We must mobilize to avert a lonely Earth](#)

Senator Udall and Subhankar Banerjee on why the U.S. needs to repair the environmental damage that the Trump administration has wrought, both within the country and across the world, and why they are optimistic about the future.

Undark: [As Election Day nears, taking stock of an expertise exodus](#)

Since Trump took office in January 2017, many federal scientists have reported that the administration has undermined or dismissed their work. Some have been fired. Others have left in frustration or protest as Trump appointees meddled with everything from nutrition research to Covid-19 data to mining and survey reports. 1,600 government scientists are estimated to have left in the first two years of Trump's presidency. Eight of them tell their stories.

Grist.org: [“It just goes into a black hole”](#)

The Trump administration is burying dozens of studies detailing the promise of renewable energy, impeding a transition away from fossil fuels. Documents obtained by InvestigateWest identify at least 46 reports from almost every program within the U.S. Energy Department's

energy efficiency and renewables office and seven national labs that have been stalled, downgraded, or spiked.

*Environmental Health News: [The dangerous fringe theory behind the push toward herd immunity](#)
Officials at the highest levels are discussing the possibility of caving in on controlling the coronavirus and instead letting it run rampant throughout the United States until we reach "herd immunity." More than 6,200 scientists, health professionals, and research organizations say this is inhumane and have signed a memorandum rejecting herd immunity as a legitimate strategy.*

*Yale Environment 360: [With Justice Barrett, a tectonic court shift on the environment](#)
The accession of Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court will cement a conservative majority that is likely to give polluting industries freer rein, limit the ability of citizens to sue, and call into question the very basis of the EPA to issue and enforce regulations.*

*Rolling Stone: [More than 70 science and climate journalists challenge Supreme Court nomination of Amy Coney Barrett](#)
"Judge Coney Barrett has displayed a profound inability to understand the ecological crisis of our times, and in so doing she enables it."*

TAKE ACTION

*UCS: [What comes after the 2020 election?](#)
The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) is monitoring key counties around the country to watch for irregularities, helping media and local voting rights organizations serve as an antidote to the ocean of uncertainty and disinformation spreading around the country. This article lists what science advocates need to be prepared for after November 3.*

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